



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.1635 | FAX (517) 373.3300

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/vanwoerkom/

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Contact: Kirk Hanna
(866) 305-2134

Van Woerkom Co-Sponsors Bill to Assist the Working Disabled

“Michigan Freedom to Work for Individuals with Disabilities Law” passed by Senate

LANSING – The Michigan State Senate today passed legislation to create the “Michigan Freedom to Work for Individuals with Disabilities Law,” co-sponsor Senator Gerald Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores, announced.

“The ‘Michigan Freedom to Work for Individuals with Disabilities Law’ is right for Michigan workers,” Van Woerkom said. “The new law will encourage disabled workers to work if they are able, and maintain their access to quality health care.”

Senate Bill 22 would allow individuals with disabilities to earn up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level before having to pay Medicaid health premiums. The legislation would allow disabled workers to accumulate assets up to \$75,000 combined with retirement, IRA and 401K accounts, and remain eligible for Medicaid. The bill also would enable workers to take temporary breaks in employment for medical reasons or as a result in involuntary layoff.

The legislation was developed in response to the testimony taken during the 2002 Medicaid Buy-In Task Force. Task force members included legislators, employers, state department representatives, the Senate Fiscal Agency and workers with disabilities.

SB 22 would be budget neutral, according to the Administration and the Department of Community Health.

The “Michigan Freedom to Work for Individuals with Disabilities Law” was unanimously passed the Senate. It will now be considered by the House of Representatives.